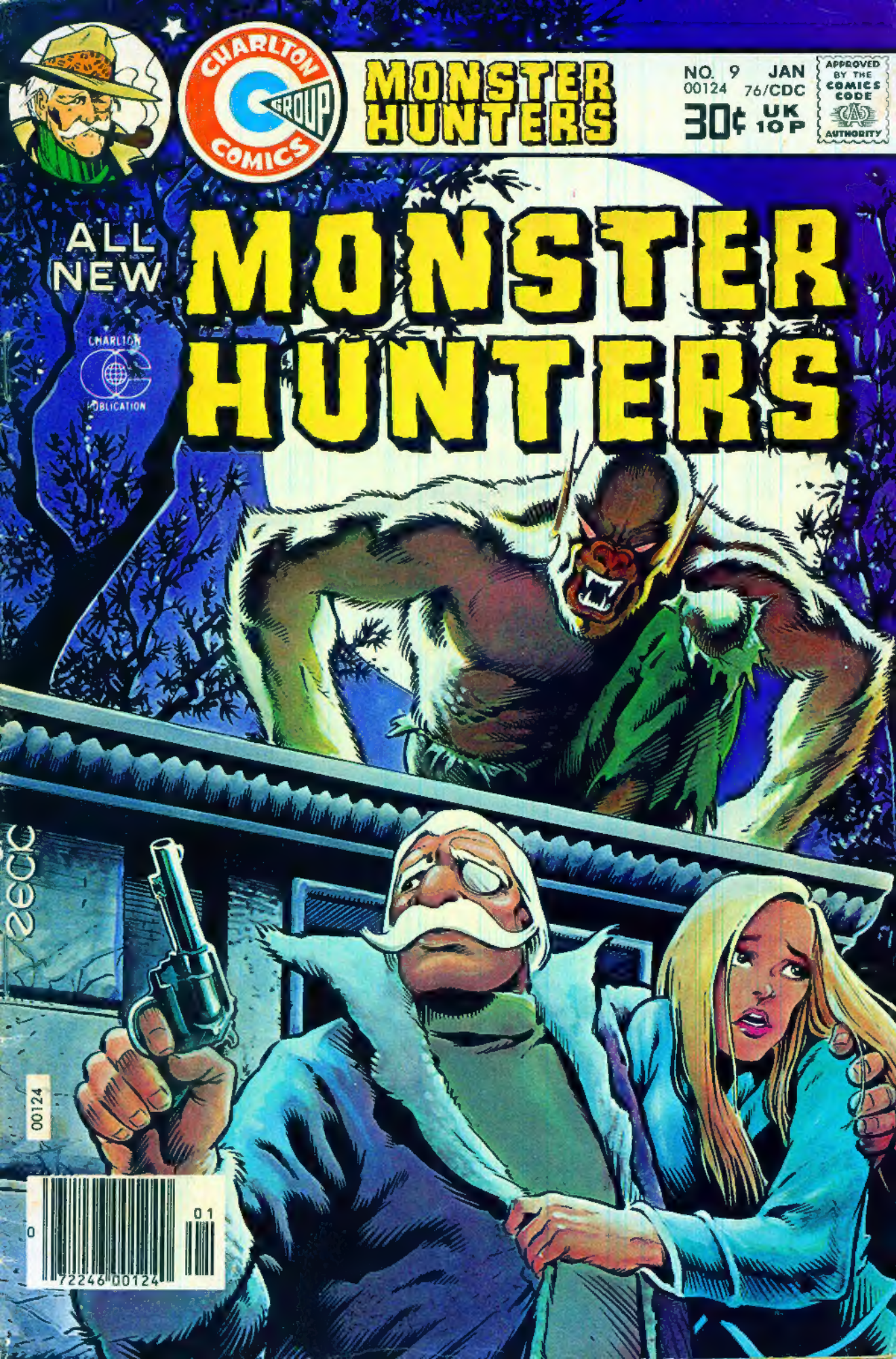
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PROLOGUE

AT WHITESHROUD ESTATES, HOME OF THE CLUB CALLED MONSTER HUNTERS, I BEGIN MY TALE. I REMEMBERED THAT IT WAS ONE OF THOSE RAINY, ELECTRIFYING NIGHTS WHEN THE HEAVENS WERE AT WAR WITH THE EARTH.

KA-BOOM

WITHIN MY CHAMBERS, A LATE VISITOR HAD SOUGHT AN AUDIENCE. SHE APPEARED TO BE IN FEAR FOR HER LIFE.

MY NAME IS **CLORIS MONTIGUE** AND I AM IN LINE TO INHERIT SEVERAL **THOUSANDS** OF DOLLARS. TOMORROW MY RELATIVES GATHER FOR THE READING OF MY LATE UNCLE'S **WILL**.

IF YOU ARE AFRAID OF ONE OR ALL OF YOUR RELATIVES, YOU SHOULD HIRE A **PRIVATE DETECTIVE**, NOT ME.

COLONEL WHITESHROUD, ONE OF MY RELATIVES, WHICH ONE I DO NOT KNOW,...

SUFFERS FROM THE FAMILY SICKNESS OF **LYCANTHROPY!**

HE IS A **WEREWOLF?!**

NOW YOU KNOW WHY I'VE COME TO **YOU**. I NEED YOU AS AN EXPERT ON THE SUBJECT OF **MONSTERS** TO TRAP AND DESTROY THIS CREATURE.

I WILL JOIN YOU AT **MONTIGUE MANOR** ON THE MORROW.

GOOD EVENING, MISS MONTIGUE.

D-8091

AS THE LOVELY GIRL DEPARTED, I BEGAN MY PREPARATIONS.

I MUST CHECK OVER THE **SCROLL** IN THE **WEREWOLF WING** OF THE HOUSE.

MONSTER HUNTERS

MONSTER HUNTERS Vol. 3, No. 9, January, 1977,
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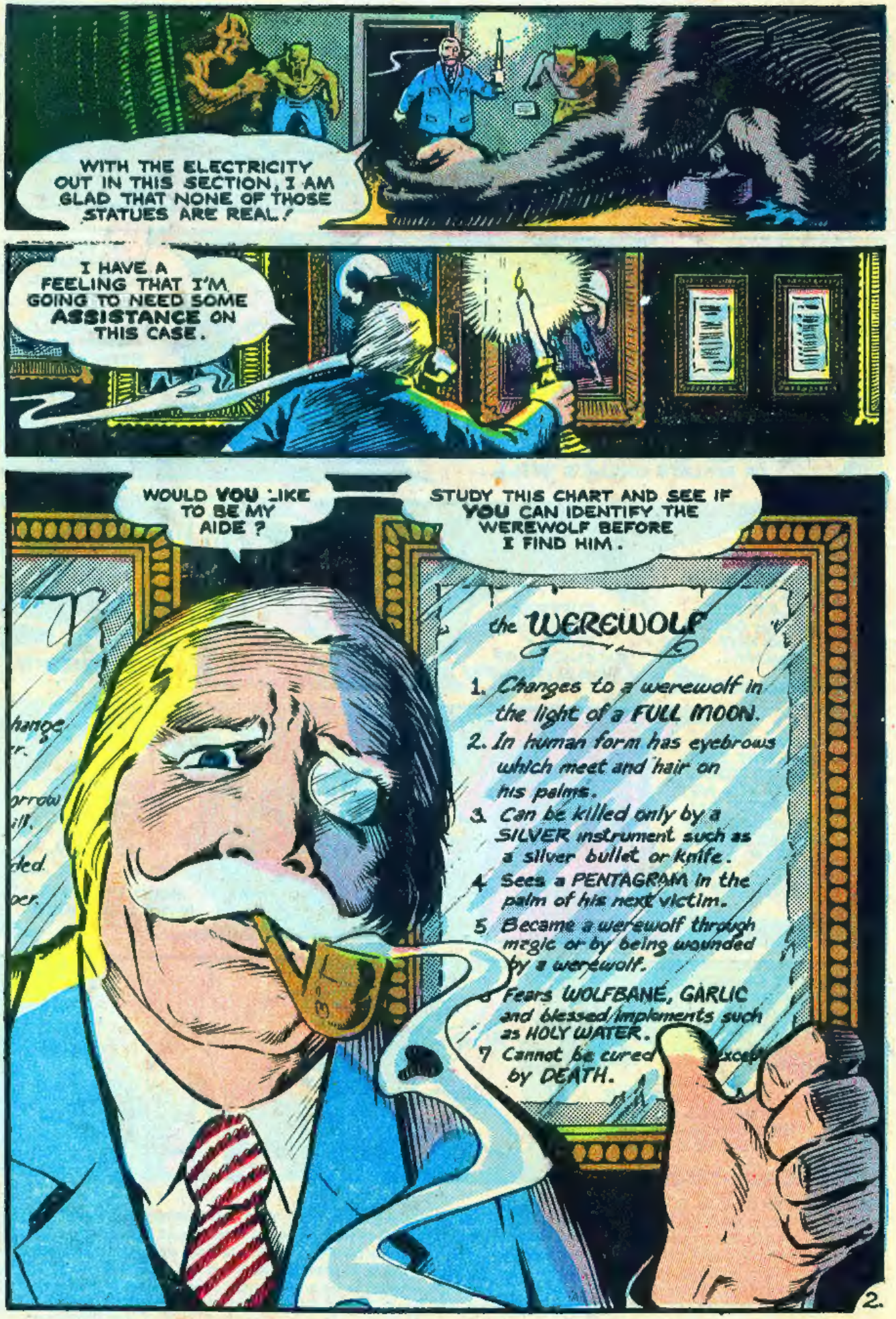
WITH THE ELECTRICITY OUT IN THIS SECTION, I AM GLAD THAT NONE OF THOSE STATUES ARE REAL!
I HAVE A FEELING THAT I'M GOING TO NEED SOME ASSISTANCE ON THIS CASE.
WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE MY AIDE ?
STUDY THIS CHART AND SEE IF YOU CAN IDENTIFY THE WEREWOLF BEFORE I FIND HIM.
the WEREWOLF
1. Changes to a werewolf in the light of a FULL MOON.
2. In human form has eyebrows which meet and hair on his palms.
3. Can be killed only by a SILVER instrument such as a silver bullet or knife.
4 Sees a PENTAGRAM in the palm of his next victim.
5 Became a werewolf through magic or by being wounded by a werewolf.
6 Fears WOLFBANE, GARLIC and blessed implements such as HOLY WATER.
7 Cannot be cured by DEATH.

BELOW IS MONTIGUE MANOR AND PORTRAITS OF THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS OF THE STORY. USE THIS AND THE FACING PAGE AS REFERENCES. DON'T PEEK AT THE LAST PAGE UNTIL YOU ARE CERTAIN THAT YOU HAVE SOLVED THE MYSTERY OF .....
THE HOUR OF THE WEREWOLF
CLORIS MONTIGUE: FAVORITE NIECE OF THE LATE WALTER MONTIGUE. SHE EARNS HER LIVING AS A FASHION DESIGNER.
DR. ROGER MONTIGUE: A DENTIST AND CLORIS' COUSIN.
BOB COURTNEY: GAMEKEEPER FOR THE MONTIGUE ESTATE.
FRED LASLOW: THE FAMILY LAWYER.
CHIN LEE: WALTER MONTIGUE'S ADOPTED DAUGHTER.
MR. AND MRS. BASS: FAITHFUL SERVANTS.
EDITOR: Gene Wildman
WRITER: Nick Cuti
ARTIST: M.J. Zick

I BEGAN MY INVESTIGATION NOT AT THE MONTIGUE HOUSE, BUT IN THE SURROUNDING WOODS.
KEEP SEARCHING, PLATO. IF THERE ARE ANY UNUSUAL TRACKS, THEN YOU SHOULD UNCOVER THEM.
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE! DON'T MAKE A MOVE OR I'LL BLOW YOUR HEAD OFF!
DON'T GET A NERVOUS TRIGGER FINGER. MY NAME IS COLONEL WHITESHROUD.
WHITESHROUD, THE FAMOUS MONSTER HUNTER? I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE WEREWOLF!
I INVITED HIM UP, BOB. I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT NEED SOME HELP IN TRACKING DOWN THE MONSTER.
BOB AND I ARE ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED.
UNCLE NEVER APPROVED OF OUR ROMANCE, BUT NOW HE CAN'T INTERFERE.
AREN'T YOU WORRIED ABOUT THE MONTIGUE CURSE, MR. COURTNEY?
I LOVE CLORIS. WHY SHOULD THE CURSE WORRY ME?
IT SHOULD, UNLESS YOU ARE THE BEAST. THE GAMEKEEPER WOULD BE OBVIOUS PREY FOR A ROAMING WEREWOLF. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN ATTACKED BY AN ANIMAL?
4.

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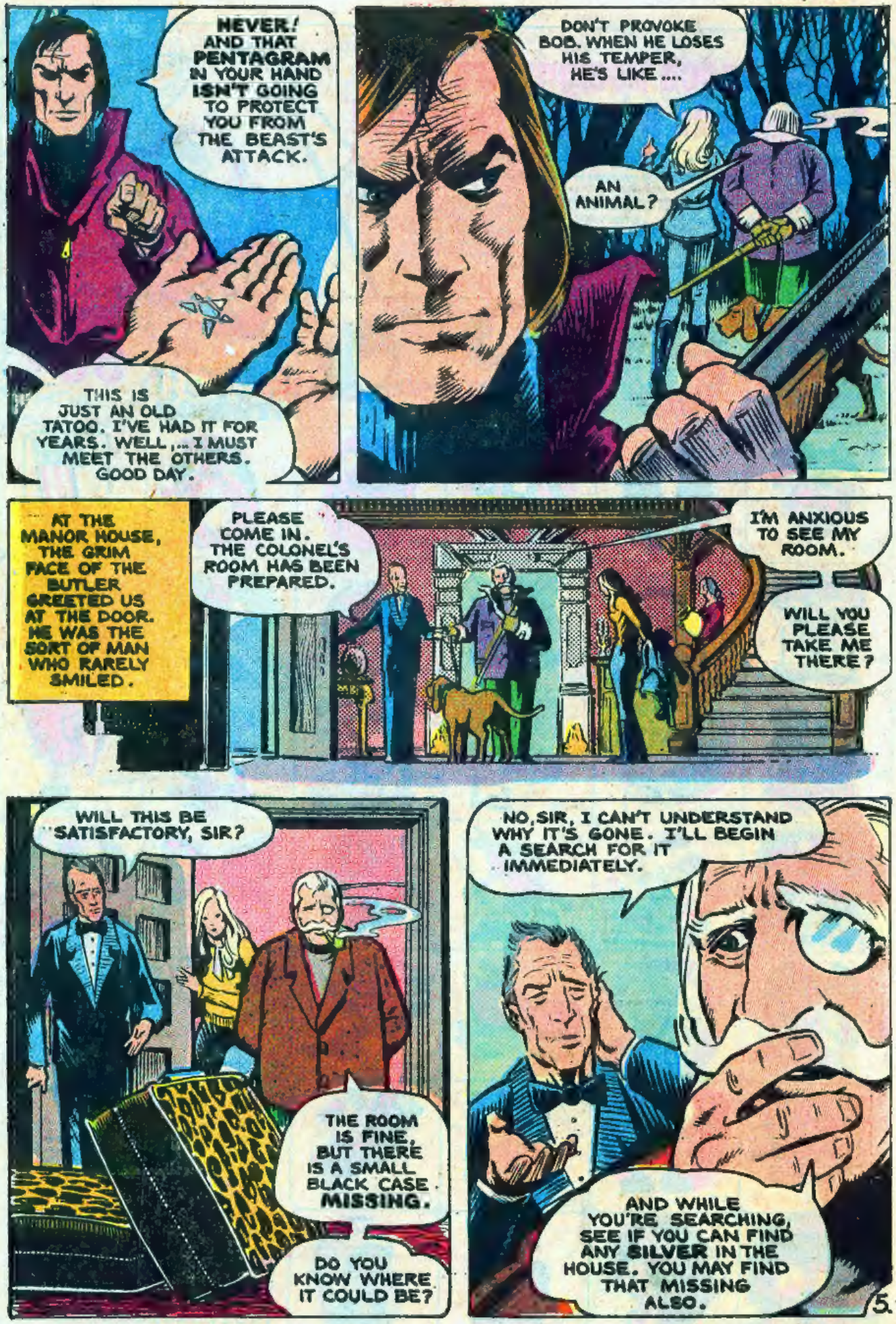
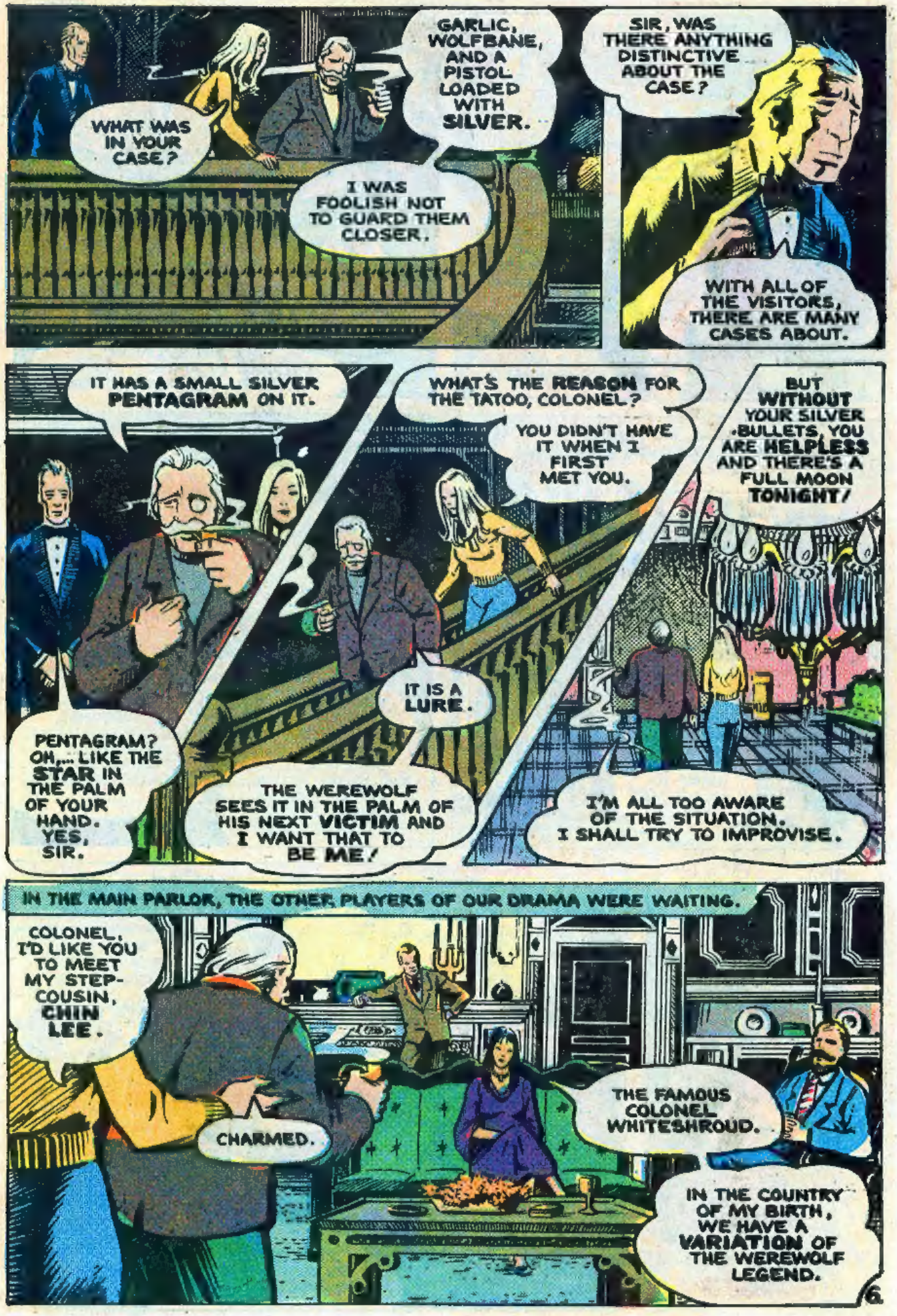
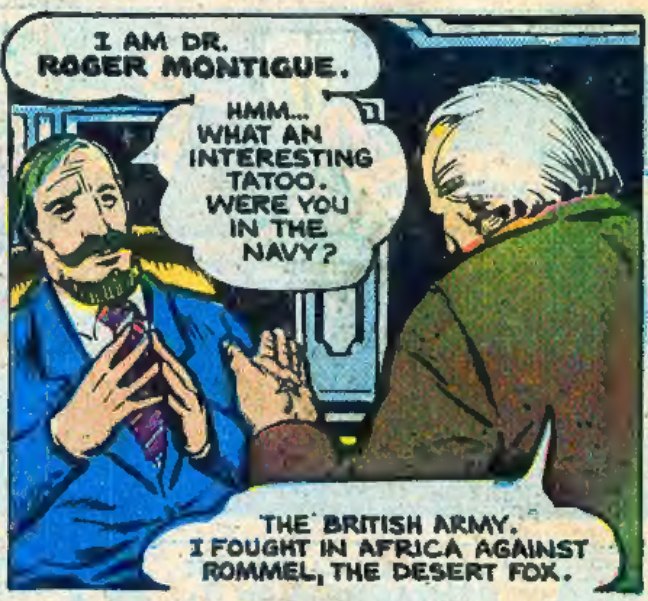
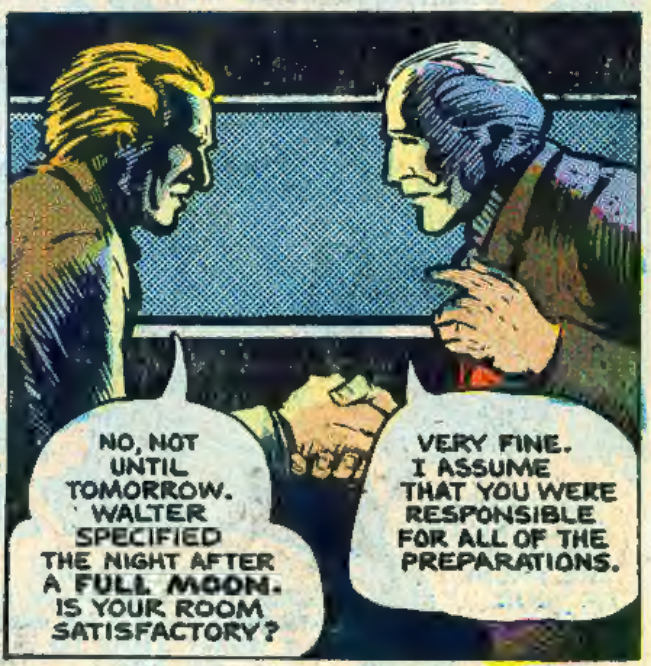

NEVER! AND THAT PENTAGRAM IN YOUR HAND ISN'T GOING TO PROTECT YOU FROM THE BEAST'S ATTACK.
THIS IS JUST AN OLD TATOO. I'VE HAD IT FOR YEARS. WELL,... I MUST MEET THE OTHERS. GOOD DAY.
DON'T PROVOKE BOB. WHEN HE LOSES HIS TEMPER, HE'S LIKE....
AN ANIMAL?
AT THE MANOR HOUSE, THE GRIM FACE OF THE BUTLER GREETED US AT THE DOOR. HE WAS THE SORT OF MAN WHO RARELY SMILED.
PLEASE COME IN. THE COLONEL'S ROOM HAS BEEN PREPARED.
I'M ANXIOUS TO SEE MY ROOM.
WILL YOU PLEASE TAKE ME THERE?
WILL THIS BE SATISFACTORY, SIR?
THE ROOM IS FINE, BUT THERE IS A SMALL BLACK CASE MISSING.
DO YOU KNOW WHERE IT COULD BE?
NO, SIR, I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY IT'S GONE. I'LL BEGIN A SEARCH FOR IT IMMEDIATELY.
AND WHILE YOU'RE SEARCHING, SEE IF YOU CAN FIND ANY SILVER IN THE HOUSE. YOU MAY FIND THAT MISSING ALSO.


WHAT WAS IN YOUR CASE?
GARLIC, WOLFBANE, AND A PISTOL LOADED WITH SILVER.
I WAS FOOLISH NOT TO GUARD THEM CLOSER.
SIR, WAS THERE ANYTHING DISTINCTIVE ABOUT THE CASE?
WITH ALL OF THE VISITORS, THERE ARE MANY CASES ABOUT.
IT HAS A SMALL SILVER PENTAGRAM ON IT.
PENTAGRAM? OH,... LIKE THE STAR IN THE PALM OF YOUR HAND. YES, SIR.
WHAT'S THE REASON FOR THE TATOO, COLONEL?
YOU DIDN'T HAVE IT WHEN I FIRST MET YOU.
IT IS A LURE.
THE WEREWOLF SEES IT IN THE PALM OF HIS NEXT VICTIM AND I WANT THAT TO BE ME!
BUT WITHOUT YOUR SILVER BULLETS, YOU ARE HELPLESS AND THERE'S A FULL MOON TONIGHT!
I'M ALL TOO AWARE OF THE SITUATION. I SHALL TRY TO IMPROVISE.
IN THE MAIN PARLOR, THE OTHER PLAYERS OF OUR DRAMA WERE WAITING.
COLONEL, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET MY STEP-COUSIN, CHIN LEE.
CHARMED.
THE FAMOUS COLONEL WHITESHROUD.
IN THE COUNTRY OF MY BIRTH, WE HAVE A VARIATION OF THE WEREWOLF LEGEND.

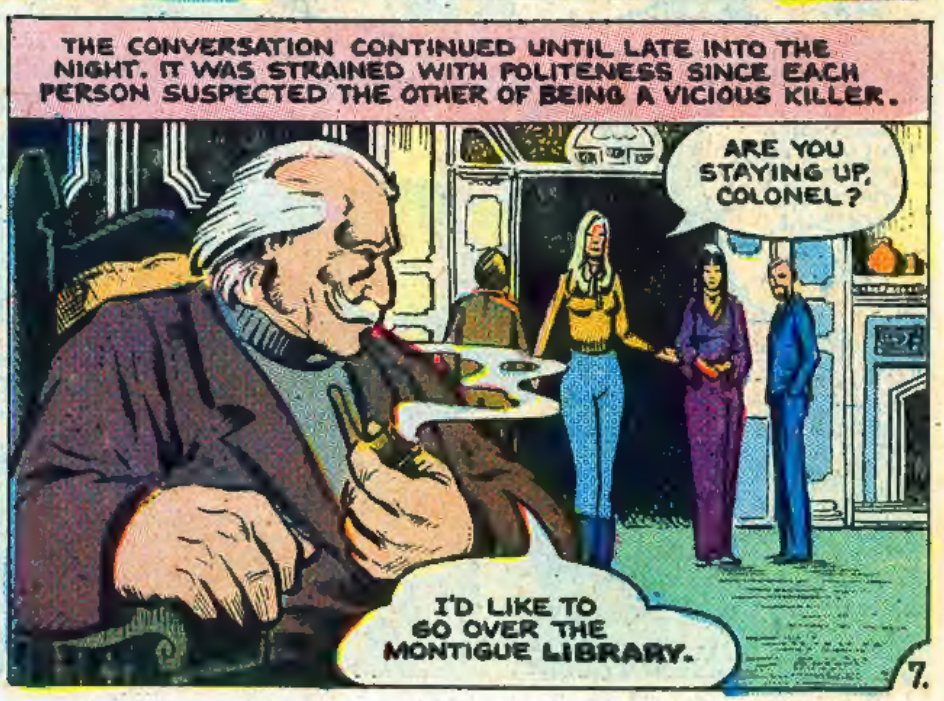
THE PRINCIPAL ANIMAL, HOWEVER, IS A FOX, NOT A WOLF, AND IT IS A FEMALE ADDICTION.
YOU ARE A VERY LEARNED MAN, COLONEL.
I AM IMPRESSED.


I AM DR. ROGER MONTIGUE.
HMM... WHAT AN INTERESTING TATOO. WERE YOU IN THE NAVY?
THE BRITISH ARMY. I FOUGHT IN AFRICA AGAINST ROMMEL, THE DESERT FOX.

AND THIS IS THE FAMILY LAWYER, FREDERICK LASLOW.
AH, MR. LASLOW, ARE WE GATHERED HERE TO READ THE WILL?


NO, NOT UNTIL TOMORROW. WALTER SPECIFIED THE NIGHT AFTER A FULL MOON. IS YOUR ROOM SATISFACTORY?
VERY FINE. I ASSUME THAT YOU WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL OF THE PREPARATIONS.

YES, AS THE FAMILY ATTORNEY, I CONSIDERED IT MY DUTY.
YOU'VE DONE AN EXCELLENT JOB.


THE CONVERSATION CONTINUED UNTIL LATE INTO THE NIGHT. IT WAS STRAINED WITH POLITENESS SINCE EACH PERSON SUSPECTED THE OTHER OF BEING A VICIOUS KILLER.
ARE YOU STAYING UP, COLONEL?
I'D LIKE TO GO OVER THE MONTIGUE LIBRARY.

WITHIN THESE VOLUMES, THERE MAY BE A CLUE TO THE MONSTER'S IDENTITY. IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT WALTER MONTIGUE KNEW WHO IT WAS, BUT HE MAY HAVE SUSPECTED SOMEONE AND RECORDED IT IN A JOURNAL.
WHAT WAS THAT?
IS SOMEONE SKULKING IN THE OUTSIDE CORRIDOR?
I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW LATE IT WAS.
IT IS THE HOUR OF THE WEREWOLF!
THE BLADE OF MY KNIFE HAS A SILVER TIP.
THE BEAST WILL KNOW THAT INSTINCTIVELY AND WILL AVOID THE SHAFT, BUT I MUST BE QUICKER.
THIS REMINDS ME OF NIGHT FIGHTING DURING MY COMMANDO DAYS.
I HOPE I STILL HAVE IT IN ME!

GRRRA!
THE MONTIGUE MONSTER!!
AT LAST!
I LUNGED AT THE BEAST WITH MY LONG BLADED KNIFE, BUT THE CREATURE WAS TOO FAST.
I'M NOT AS UNPREPARED AS YOU MAY HAVE HOPED!
AAAAG!
RRRIP
GRRAARRR
WAP!
UNGHH!

DOWN, BUT NOT OUT! MY KNIFE IS STILL MY BEST WEAPON!
AND I SHALL USE IT!
MY HEART FROZE IN MY CHEST AS I WATCHED THE SPARKLE OF THE BLADE VANISH INTO THE DARKNESS BEYOND THE WINDOW.
KRASH!
I KNEW THAT I WAS NO MATCH FOR THE INHUMAN STRENGTH OF THE BEAST, NOR COULD I HOPE TO ESCAPE FROM ITS SWIFT MOVEMENTS. I BRACED MYSELF FOR THE END!
I WISH THAT I HAD DISCOVERED YOUR IDENTITY BEFORE YOU KILLED ME!
GRRRR
KA-BAM
COURTNEY!

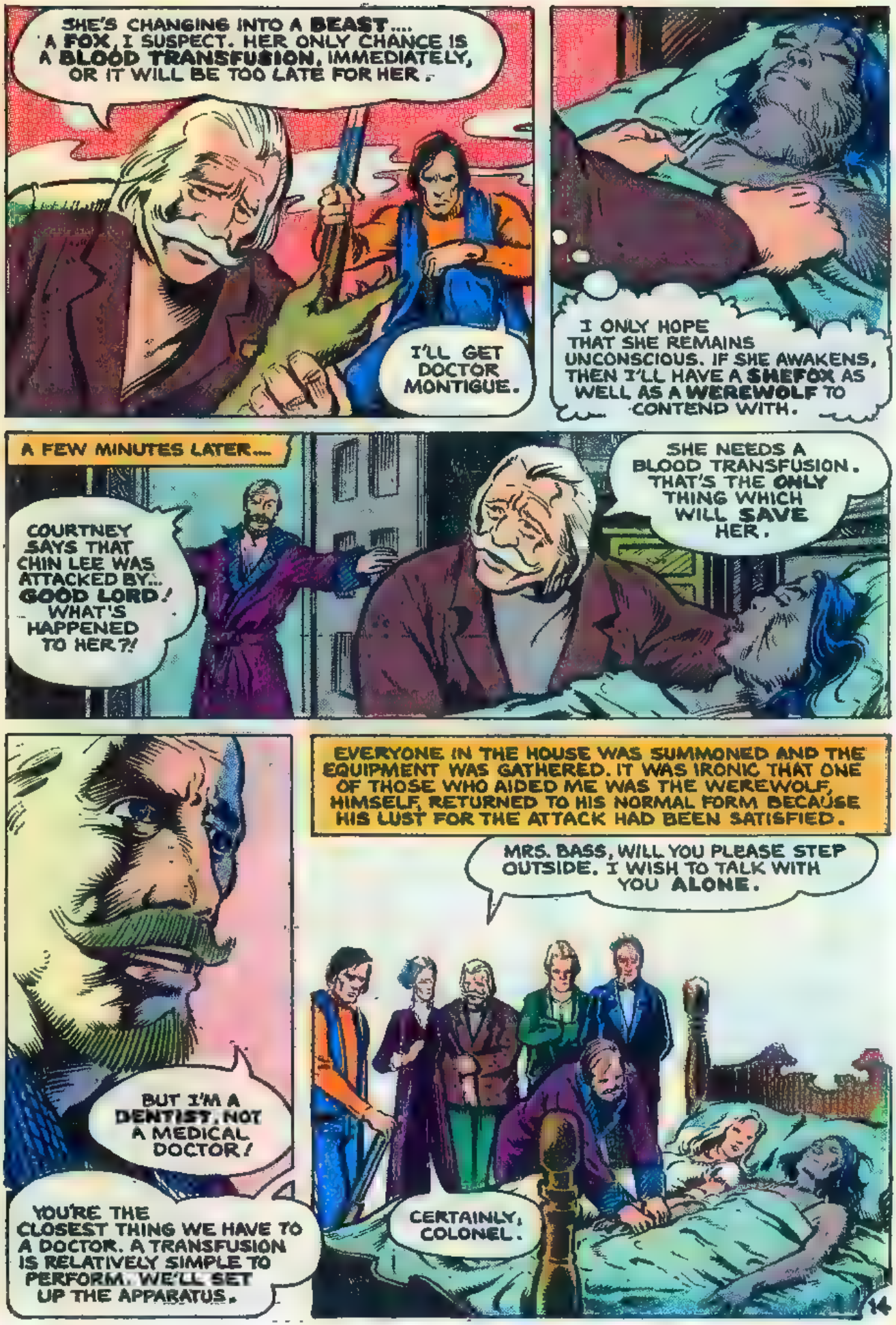
CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

STAY DOWN, COLONEL! DON'T WANDER INTO MY LINE OF FIRE!
RRRRRR
KA-BLAM
HOW CAN ANYTHING LIVE AFTER TWO BLASTS FROM A SHOTGUN?!
IF IT MAKES IT TO THE DEEP WOODS, WE'LL NEVER FIND IT! GET YOUR HOUND AND WE'LL TRACK THE BEAST!
IT'S GOING TO ESCAPE!
IT'S NOT HEADED FOR THE WOODS
IT MUST REALIZE NOW THAT I WAS NOT ITS TRUE VICTIM....
...AND THE CREATURE WILL SEARCH THE HOUSE UNTIL IT FINDS THE SECOND PERSON WHOSE HAND CONTAINS THE PENTAGRAM.
BUT WHO IS IT?!
ONLY THE WEREWOLF WOULD SEE THE PENTAGRAM.

WITH CANINE AGILITY, THE BEAST CLIMBED ALONG THE HOUSE TOWARD THE ROOM OF ITS INTENDED VICTIM ....
THE LOVELY CHIN LEE!
I HAVE ASCENDED FROM POVERTY AS A CHILD TO WEALTH AS A WOMAN BECAUSE OF MY STEP-FATHER'S PITY FOR A WAR ORPHAN,....
BUT IS IT WORTH ALL OF THIS APPREHENSION?
CRASH
GRRR
GRRRAAAFF
HELP ME!!
SOMEONE, PLEASE HELP ME!

CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

THE SCREAMS COME FROM CHIN LEE'S ROOM!
WE WON'T GET TO HER IN TIME! WE'LL BE TOO LATE!
IT'S LOCKED! WE CAN'T SEARCH FOR THE KEY. WE'LL HAVE TO BREAK DOWN THE DOOR!
IT'S TOO HEAVY! I'LL SHOOT THE LOCK OFF!
BAM
DON'T FIRE OR YOU'LL HIT THE GIRL! BUT YOU MUST DRIVE IT AWAY!
GRRRRRRR
THAT'S ABOUT ALL WE CAN DO! THE THING SEEMS TO BE UNKILLABLE!
THUNK!
AGH!
KBLAM
LEAVE THE WOLF GO!
CHIN LEE IS STILL ALIVE, BUT I FEAR THAT SHE HAS CAUGHT THE MALADY. HER BLOOD HAS BEEN MIXED WITH THAT OF THE BEAST!


SHE'S CHANGING INTO A BEAST.... A FOX, I SUSPECT. HER ONLY CHANCE IS A BLOOD TRANSFUSION, IMMEDIATELY, OR IT WILL BE TOO LATE FOR HER.
I'LL GET DOCTOR MONTIGUE.
I ONLY HOPE THAT SHE REMAINS UNCONSCIOUS. IF SHE AWAKENS, THEN I'LL HAVE A SHEFOX AS WELL AS A WEREWOLF TO CONTEND WITH.
A FEW MINUTES LATER...
COURTNEY SAYS THAT CHIN LEE WAS ATTACKED BY... GOOD LORD! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HER?!
SHE NEEDS A BLOOD TRANSFUSION. THAT'S THE ONLY THING WHICH WILL SAVE HER.
EVERYONE IN THE HOUSE WAS SUMMONED AND THE EQUIPMENT WAS GATHERED. IT WAS IRONIC THAT ONE OF THOSE WHO AIDED ME WAS THE WEREWOLF, HIMSELF, RETURNED TO HIS NORMAL FORM BECAUSE HIS LUST FOR THE ATTACK HAD BEEN SATISFIED.
MRS. BASS, WILL YOU PLEASE STEP OUTSIDE. I WISH TO TALK WITH YOU ALONE.
BUT I'M A DENTIST, NOT A MEDICAL DOCTOR!
YOU'RE THE CLOSEST THING WE HAVE TO A DOCTOR. A TRANSFUSION IS RELATIVELY SIMPLE TO PERFORM. WE'LL SET UP THE APPARATUS.
CERTAINLY, COLONEL.

HAVE YOU LOCATED ANY SILVER IN THE HOUSE OR AT LEAST FOUND MY KNIFE?
NONE, SIR,...
...AND YOUR KNIFE IS NOT OUTSIDE. THE BEAST MUST HAVE IT.
THAT SEEMS LOGICAL. WOULD YOU TRY TO RAISE THIS NUMBER FOR ME?
OF COURSE, COLONEL.
I HAD DECIDED TO CONFER WITH AN OLD FRIEND WHO WAS AN EXPERT ON WERECREATURES. I NEEDED A FRESH POINT OF VIEW....
....FROM BARON WEIRWOLF!
...I'M AFRAID THAT'S THE STORY SO FAR, BARON. WITHOUT SILVER, I'M HELPLESS.
AH, BUT THERE IS SILVER IN THE HOUSE. IT IS LOCATED IN A PLACE WHERE THE WEREWOLF COULD NOT EASILY REMOVE IT.
I SEE...
...YES, I HADN'T THOUGHT ABOUT THAT.
NOW ALL I HAVE TO DO IS LOCATE THE MONSTER.
THANKS FOR YOUR HELP.

COLONEL WHITESHROUD, I HAVE SOME IMPORTANT INFORMATION WHICH MAY CLEAR UP YOUR MYSTERY.
I'D LIKE TO HEAR IT, MR. LASLOW.
WALTER MONTIGUE GAVE ME THIS ENVELOPE FOR SAFE KEEPING BEFORE HE DIED.
HE INSTRUCTED ME TO OPEN IT UPON HIS DEATH.
THEN WHY HAVEN'T YOU DONE SO?
I WANTED TO WAIT UNTIL THE READING OF THE WILL, BUT I THINK THAT NOW IS THE TIME.
I AGREE, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU CONSIDER THE CONTENTS.
THIS LETTER IS A CONFESSION! MONTIGUE ADMITS TO BEING THE WEREWOLF!
BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. HE'S DEAD!...WE WERE ALL PRESENT AT HIS ENTOMBMENT!
ENTOMBMENT? NOT BURIAL? WHERE IS HIS BODY?
IN THE VAULT ON THE ISLAND IN THE CENTER OF THE LAKE.

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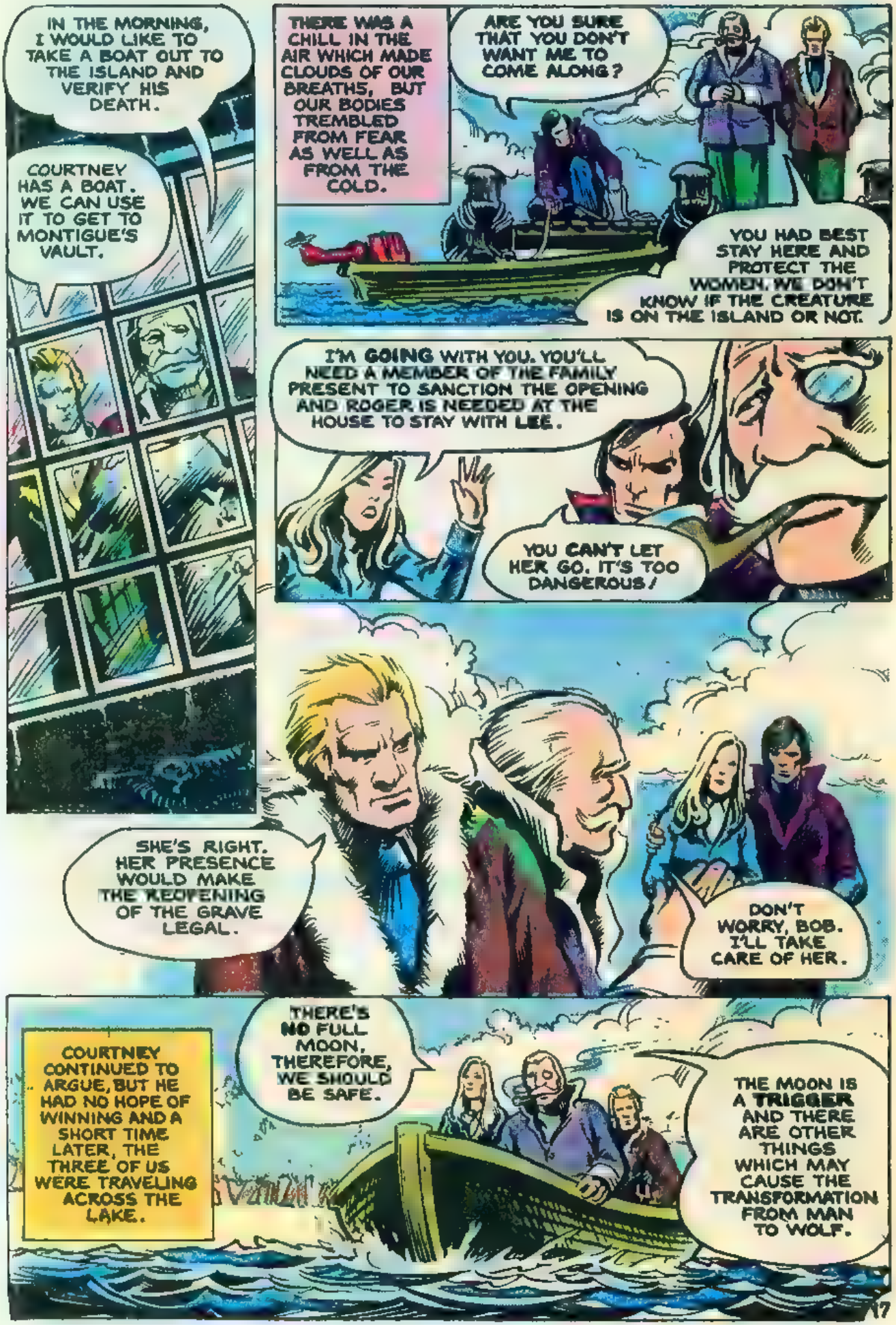
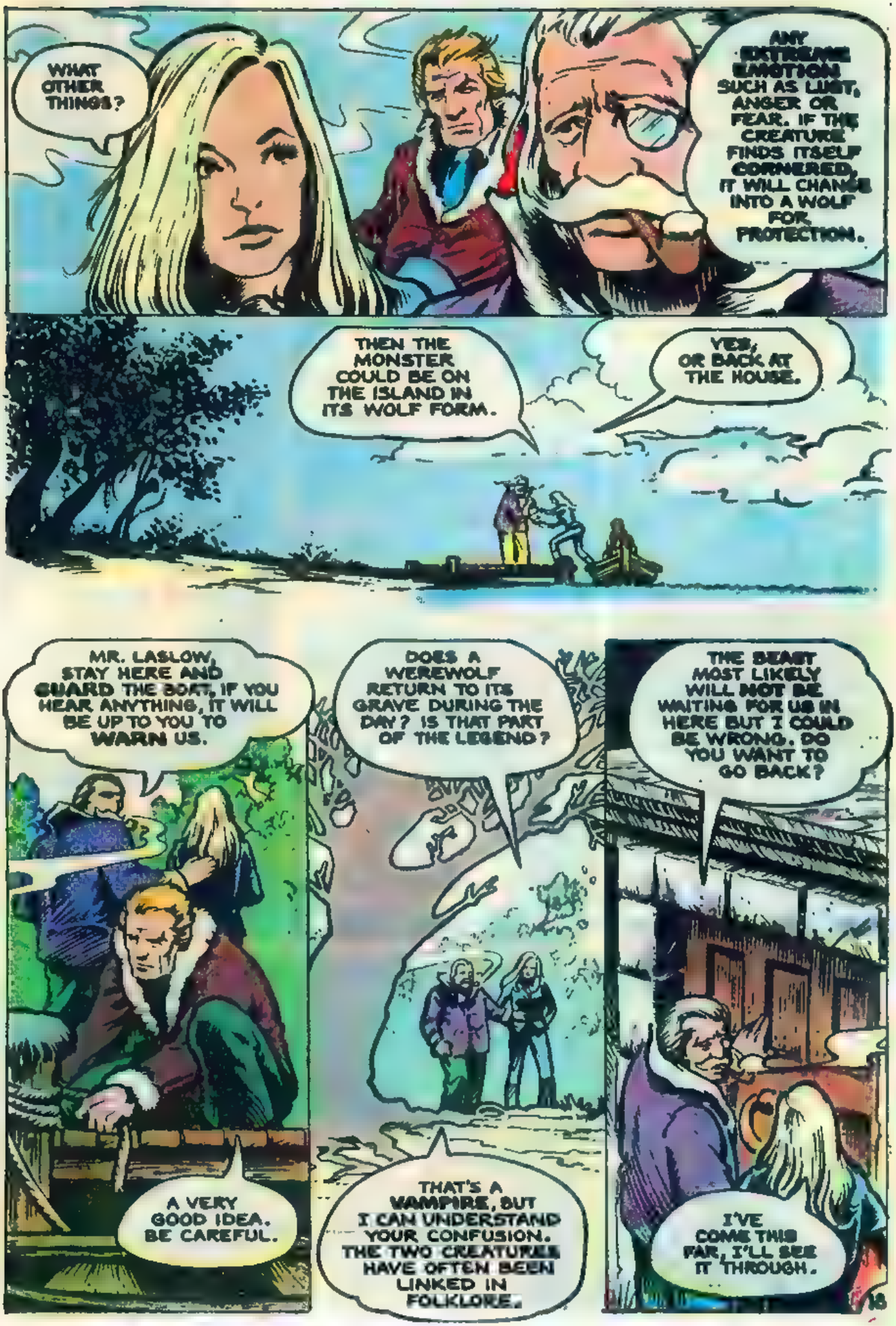
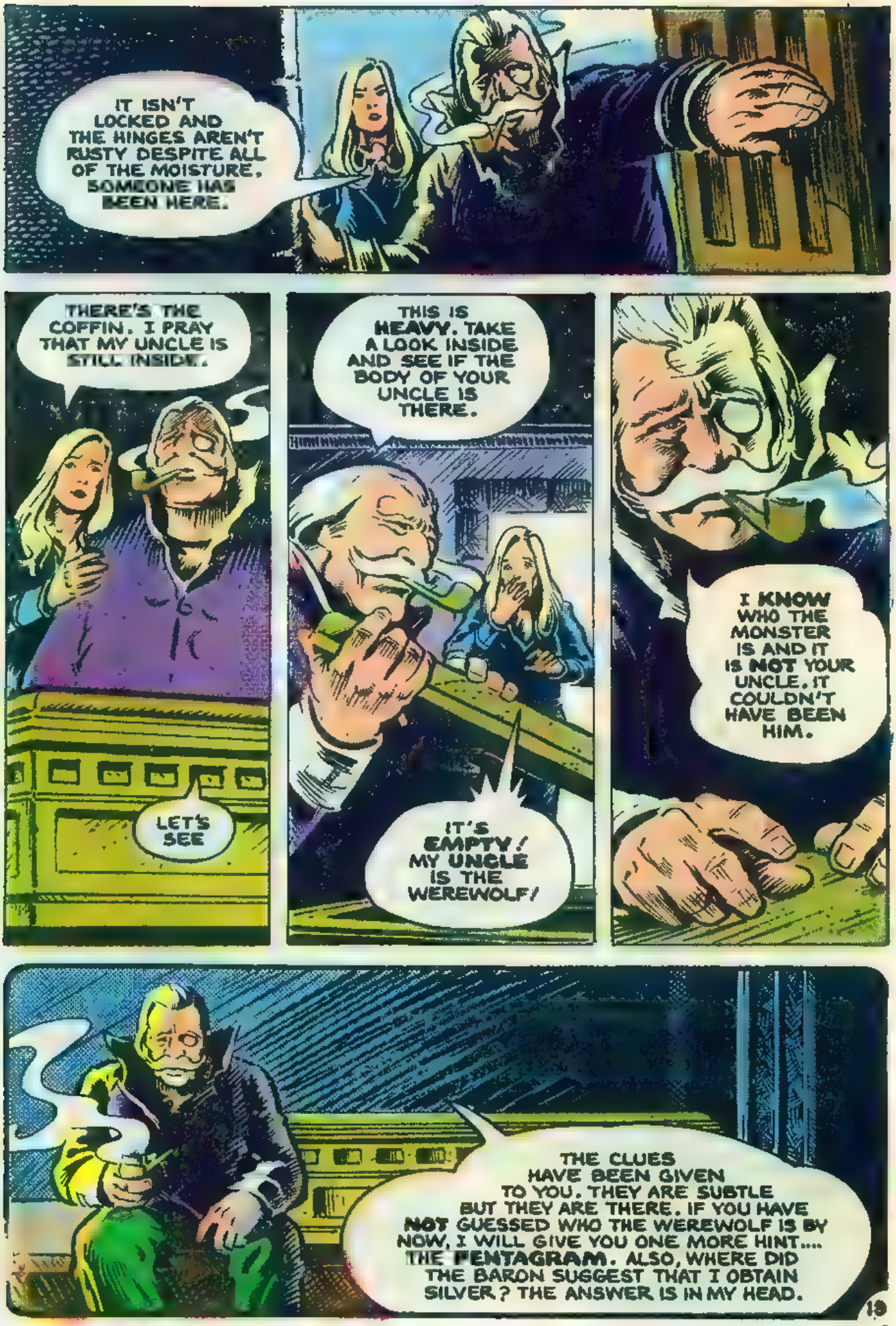
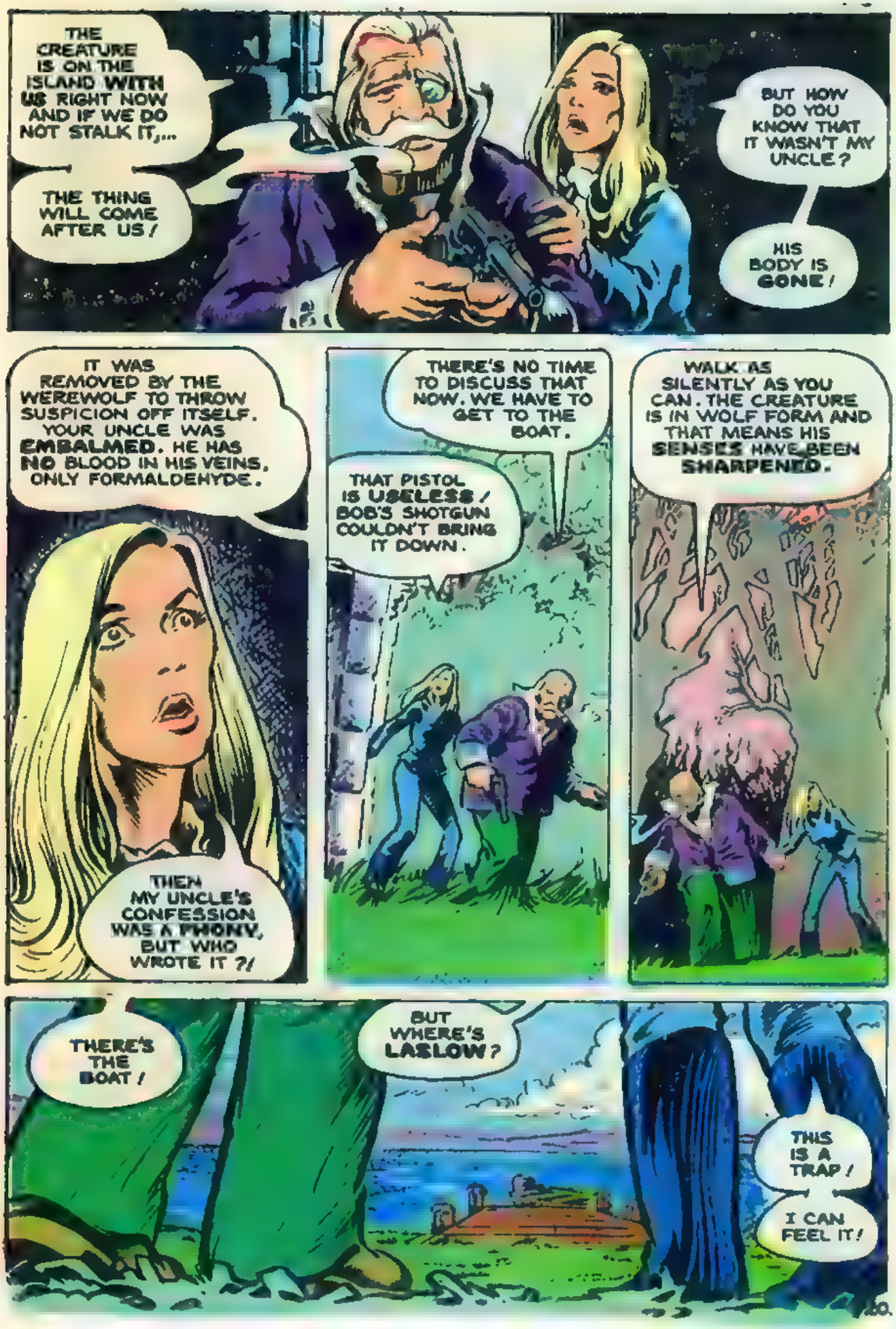
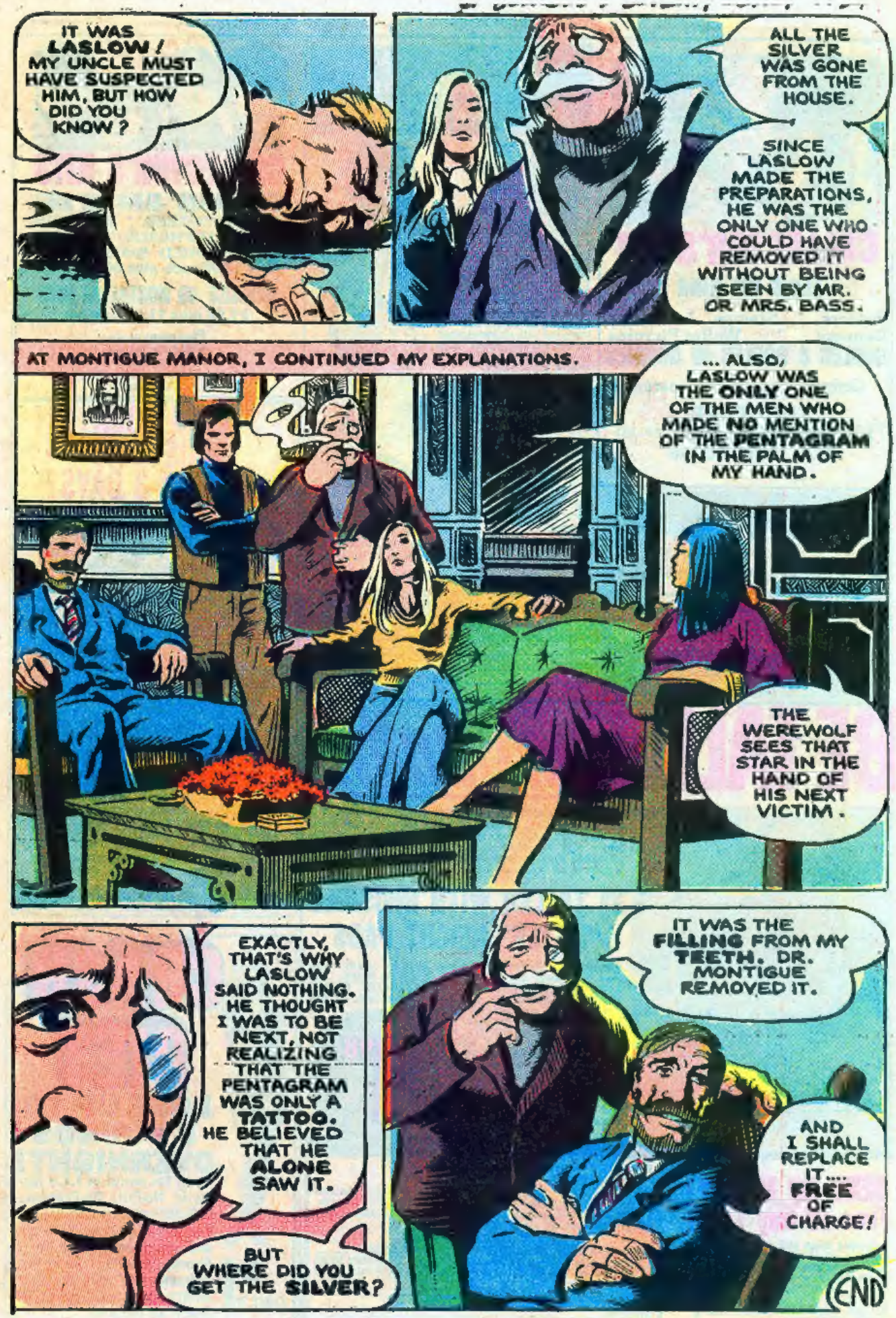

IN THE MORNING, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A BOAT OUT TO THE ISLAND AND VERIFY HIS DEATH.
COURTNEY HAS A BOAT. WE CAN USE IT TO GET TO MONTIGUE'S VAULT.
THERE WAS A CHILL IN THE AIR WHICH MADE CLOUDS OF OUR BREATHS, BUT OUR BODIES TREMBLED FROM FEAR AS WELL AS FROM THE COLD.
ARE YOU SURE THAT YOU DON'T WANT ME TO COME ALONG?
YOU HAD BEST STAY HERE AND PROTECT THE WOMEN. WE DON'T KNOW IF THE CREATURE IS ON THE ISLAND OR NOT.
I'M GOING WITH YOU. YOU'LL NEED A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY PRESENT TO SANCTION THE OPENING AND ROGER IS NEEDED AT THE HOUSE TO STAY WITH LEE.
YOU CAN'T LET HER GO. IT'S TOO DANGEROUS!
SHE'S RIGHT. HER PRESENCE WOULD MAKE THE REOPENING OF THE GRAVE LEGAL.
DON'T WORRY, BOB. I'LL TAKE CARE OF HER.
COURTNEY CONTINUED TO ARGUE, BUT HE HAD NO HOPE OF WINNING AND A SHORT TIME LATER, THE THREE OF US WERE TRAVELING ACROSS THE LAKE.
THERE'S NO FULL MOON, THEREFORE, WE SHOULD BE SAFE.
THE MOON IS A TRIGGER AND THERE ARE OTHER THINGS WHICH MAY CAUSE THE TRANSFORMATION FROM MAN TO WOLF.


WHAT OTHER THINGS?
ANY EXTREME EMOTION SUCH AS LUST, ANGER OR FEAR. IF THE CREATURE FINDS ITSELF CORNERED, IT WILL CHANGE INTO A WOLF FOR PROTECTION.
THEN THE MONSTER COULD BE ON THE ISLAND IN ITS WOLF FORM.
YES, OR BACK AT THE HOUSE.
MR. LASLOW, STAY HERE AND GUARD THE BOAT. IF YOU HEAR ANYTHING, IT WILL BE UP TO YOU TO WARN US.
A VERY GOOD IDEA. BE CAREFUL.
DOES A WEREWOLF RETURN TO ITS GRAVE DURING THE DAY? IS THAT PART OF THE LEGEND?
THAT'S A VAMPIRE, BUT I CAN UNDERSTAND YOUR CONFUSION. THE TWO CREATURES HAVE OFTEN BEEN LINKED IN FOLKLORE.
THE BEAST MOST LIKELY WILL NOT BE WAITING FOR US IN HERE BUT I COULD BE WRONG. DO YOU WANT TO GO BACK?
I'VE COME THIS FAR, I'LL SEE IT THROUGH.


IT ISN'T LOCKED AND THE HINGES AREN'T RUSTY DESPITE ALL OF THE MOISTURE. SOMEONE HAS BEEN HERE.
THERE'S THE COFFIN. I PRAY THAT MY UNCLE IS STILL INSIDE.
LET'S SEE
THIS IS HEAVY. TAKE A LOOK INSIDE AND SEE IF THE BODY OF YOUR UNCLE IS THERE.
IT'S EMPTY! MY UNCLE IS THE WEREWOLF!
I KNOW WHO THE MONSTER IS AND IT IS NOT YOUR UNCLE. IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN HIM.
THE CLUES HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO YOU. THEY ARE SUBTLE BUT THEY ARE THERE. IF YOU HAVE NOT GUESSED WHO THE WEREWOLF IS BY NOW, I WILL GIVE YOU ONE MORE HINT.... THE PENTAGRAM. ALSO, WHERE DID THE BARON SUGGEST THAT I OBTAIN SILVER? THE ANSWER IS IN MY HEAD.


THE CREATURE IS ON THE ISLAND WITH US RIGHT NOW AND IF WE DO NOT STALK IT,...
THE THING WILL COME AFTER US!
BUT HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT IT WASN'T MY UNCLE?
HIS BODY IS GONE!
IT WAS REMOVED BY THE WEREWOLF TO THROW SUSPICION OFF ITSELF. YOUR UNCLE WAS EMBALMED. HE HAS NO BLOOD IN HIS VEINS, ONLY FORMALDEHYDE.
THEN MY UNCLE'S CONFESSION WAS A PHONY, BUT WHO WROTE IT?!
THERE'S NO TIME TO DISCUSS THAT NOW. WE HAVE TO GET TO THE BOAT.
THAT PISTOL IS USELESS! BOB'S SHOTGUN COULDN'T BRING IT DOWN.
WALK AS SILENTLY AS YOU CAN. THE CREATURE IS IN WOLF FORM AND THAT MEANS HIS SENSES HAVE BEEN SHARPENED.
THERE'S THE BOAT!
BUT WHERE'S LASLOW?
THIS IS A TRAP!
I CAN FEEL IT!

CLORIS WAS CORRECT. AS SOON AS WE STARTED TOWARD THE BOAT.....
GRAARRRRR
THE WEREWOLF!
YIIEEE
IT KNOCKED THE GUN FROM MY HAND!
CLORIS! I CAN'T REACH IT! YOU'LL HAVE TO SHOOT THE BEAST!!
BAM BAM
THERE WAS A SILVER BULLET IN HERE!
IT WAS THE ONLY DEVICE WHICH COULD DESTROY THE THING. BUT WHO?
YOU'LL SEE IN A MOMENT.
THE WOLF IS DYING SO THAT THE MAN MAY EMERGE FOR THE LAST TIME.


IT WAS LASLOW! MY UNCLE MUST HAVE SUSPECTED HIM, BUT HOW DID YOU KNOW?
ALL THE SILVER WAS GONE FROM THE HOUSE.
SINCE LASLOW MADE THE PREPARATIONS, HE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD HAVE REMOVED IT WITHOUT BEING SEEN BY MR. OR MRS. BASS.
AT MONTIGUE MANOR, I CONTINUED MY EXPLANATIONS.
... ALSO, LASLOW WAS THE ONLY ONE OF THE MEN WHO MADE NO MENTION OF THE PENTAGRAM IN THE PALM OF MY HAND.
THE WEREWOLF SEES THAT STAR IN THE HAND OF HIS NEXT VICTIM.
EXACTLY, THAT'S WHY LASLOW SAID NOTHING. HE THOUGHT I WAS TO BE NEXT, NOT REALIZING THAT THE PENTAGRAM WAS ONLY A TATTOO. HE BELIEVED THAT HE ALONE SAW IT.
BUT WHERE DID YOU GET THE SILVER?
IT WAS THE FILLING FROM MY TEETH. DR. MONTIGUE REMOVED IT.
AND I SHALL REPLACE IT.... FREE OF CHARGE!
END

BLOOD BEAST

"Why do you disturb me at this late hour? Go away and leave me in peace!" the Duke ordered as he fell back in his bed.

The hammering at the door to the Duke's bed chamber continued. The pounding sound echoed through the dark, silent castle.

"Enter!" the Duke shouted as he sat up.

Slowly, the massive, wooden door opened. One of the Duke's guards stepped forward to confront the feudal warlord.

"The blood beast has killed again," the guard murmured. "The serfs are terrified. The beast has killed many people," stated the guard. "It will continue to kill until someone kills it!"

"I do not need a lecture about the monster's habits," answered the Duke. "I know everything there is to know about it except where its lair is! It eludes my hunters at every turn. It must be killed, but it cannot be found!"

"Some men say that it cannot be killed," muttered the guard in a sheepish tone.

Black magic and demonology were things that the Duke didn't believe in.

"Silence!" shouted the Duke. "Do not dare to insinuate that it is a were creature. Such things do not exist!"

"The moon beast leaves no tracks," continued the guard boldly. "Its trail disappears. The footprints that it leaves, vanish into thin air. That is why your hunters have not slain the bloodthirsty monster!"

"I myself, will kill the moon beast," boasted the Duke as he crawled out from under the covers. "I must stop these stupid rumors from spreading. Is there no one in the realm who can lead me to this creature? Who is the best tracker in the land?"

"There is an old cripple called Kanto, who is reputed to be a great tracker. Kanto is a field serf who lives alone in the Black Forest," answered the guard. "Men say that old Kanto is a brother to the creatures of the wild. He knows their whims and their ways. If any man can track the blood beast, Kanto can!"

"Fetch my sword and my robes," ordered the Duke sternly. "Pack my hunting spear and prepare my steed. I will ride to Kanto's cottage immediately. I will reach the Black Forest by noon. By dusk, I will be hot on the trail of the blood beast. By the following dawn, the creature will be dead!" predicted the Duke.

When the sun was high in the sky the following afternoon, the Duke was at Kanto's cottage. The noble dismounted and stormed into the peasant's home. Inside, he found a crippled man seated at a wooden table.

"Are you Kanto the tracker?" asked the Duke.

The old man nodded. "What do you want of me?"

"I want you to lead me to the blood beast so I can kill it!" stated the Duke coldly and calmly.

"Too many animals have died because of me. Many times, I've led nobles like yourself on hunts!" said Kanto. "The thought of my past sickens me! Yesterday haunts me like a living nightmare. Go away! I am a free man. No longer am I required to do the bidding of nobles. Leave me here with my friends, the animals! Leave me in peace!"

"Track for me or I will kill you!" threatened the Duke as he drew his broadsword. "My patience wears thin. Agree or die!"

"When the sun sets, I will lead you to the monster who hates men as much as I do!" replied Kanto. "You will meet the beast face to face, but I will not help you to destroy it! It will destroy you!"

Dusk came. In the cottage, the two men waited for the curtain of darkness to fall. When the land was blanketed by shadows, the hunt would begin. When the moon was high, the monster would be on the prowl and the Duke would be on its trail.

"Why do you love animals and hate men?" the Duke asked as he stared across the table at the old tracker.

"In my heart, I am a thing of the forest. Putting my brain in a human body was a mistake of Nature," explained the aged hunter. "I would sell my soul to have the body of a strong and powerful beast. In fact, I have sold my soul!" he laughed as the glow of the full moon shone on his face.

It was then that the Duke discovered the awful truth. The blood beast was a were creature! The tracker had kept his promise. He'd led the Duke to the monster. Kanto was the blood beast!

Howls, growls and cries of pain and anguish echoed out of the cottage. After a brief, but bloody battle, there was silence. Out of the cottage, staggered the Duke. His sword was crimson colored. The moon beast was dead!

Dear Editor;

I've already bought Issue #8 of Monster Hunters but first I want to tell you how much I enjoyed MH #7. Steve Clement's story "Statuette" was a spell-binder and a chiller from the first panel on. I didn't recognize the artwork but I suspect he's one of the top illustrators in comics. How come you didn't give a credit to the artist but you did tell us who wrote the story?

In "A Fitting Wife", you did this again, telling us Joe Molloy wrote the script but not giving the name of the illustrator. Incidentally, I believe the same artist did both stories.

There was something weird in that issue of MH. Colonel Whiteshroud told us his story of "A Fitting Wife" but it didn't seem to have an *ending*. We were taken from a view of a pig on the Sultan's throne to an eerie sequence depicting a woman hurrying through the night, only to be attacked by a vampire. It certainly looked like different artwork so I finally concluded that page was a *prologue* to the third story in the mag.

"Blood Oath", written and illustrated by Zeck, it said. It's an interesting yarn complete with haunted castles, vampire, and a shock ending. Zeck is really one of the better young artists in comicdom.

I have MH #8 but I just received it so I'm not going to enclose a critique on it until I've brooded on it awhile. One thing I can tell you ... Tom Sutton's cover is, as always, a fantastic work of art. He's got terrific ability but I wouldn't want to have the kind of nightmares he must have.

Sincerely,
Stan Comaz
Decatur, Ill.

Thanks for your letter, Stan. We agree that MH #7 was a bit of all right. You're right about Mike Zeck, of course. He's a fine young artist *and* writer. Colonel Whiteshroud assembled an excellent trio of stories and most of our readers liked what they saw.

The artist you queried us about is named *Nieto*. He's Spanish and he's really good. We want to run his work in future issues of Charlton ghost comics. Incidentally, you may not find an issue of MH after #9 hits the stands because we sometimes drop one title and add another. We're thinking of giving Colonel Whiteshroud a rest for awhile but he may return with more reminiscences some day. Meanwhile, console yourselves with Ghostly Tales, Dr. Graves, or any of the other Charlton ghost titles you'll find (hopefully) on the stands.

Dear Mr. Wildman;

What a fascinating comic book you created for us, Mr. Wildman! The first story was a real grabber. In "The Killer" we have a murderer linked at birth to his Siamese Twin, a man of good will, undeserving of the harsh fate to which he was doomed! This presented the police and his judges with an unanswerable dilemma! To punish the guilty, the innocent man would suffer! To free the innocent, the monster would be let loose on a helpless world!

The solution was really great. The writer, Carl Wessler, handled the theme beautifully and the artistic team of Larson / Boxell did a great job on the script!

You came up with something really crawly in "Wormholes!" the idea of huge night-crawlers and the other little monsters that we can't see but are always there underground, crawling, eating, breeding ... it was a *super* idea.

The last story, the one Sutton based his cover on, was really great! "Frogman" was nicely written and beautifully illustrated by Steve Ditko. I'm not really an expert on the individual styles of Charlton artists but I always recognize Ditko's excellent work.

I have one criticism of MH #8. It lacked a letter page and I usually enjoy reading what other fans think of your comic books.

Level with us, though. Don't you give preference to comic fans who express a favorable opinion of your comics? I can recall only one or two letter pages in all the years I've been reading Charlton comics in which the fan expressed disapproval of the book. Am I right?

Charlton fan,
Ron Yeager
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Thanks for your letter, Ron. We definitely prefer praise, but aren't above printing criticism when the opinions expressed are sincere and constructive. After all, we're trying to please you with our stories and artwork, and every opinion helps us determine how well we're doing. So keep those cards and letters coming in, fear fiends, and we'll see you in our other Charlton ghost titles!